1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.

643 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country,
652 though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his
661 economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in [575] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special
652 appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will
655 find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that
439 matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold
661 Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help [782 them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to 567] have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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rites being stored in the 'House of Osode'. Here, too, the crucial ceremonials take place. For though each Nupe hamlet or village in Lagos Colony performs its own rites and several of them possess their own paraphernalia, the ceremonial in the 'House of Osode' comes first and gives the signal for the other performances. Thus the scattered groups of immigrants are held together through being mobilized in the common religious activity, while the Nupe in Lagos Town form a single congregation in the strict sense of the word. The religious rites thus preserved are therefore more than merely a symbol of tribal identity: they also make this identity concretely effective, that is, turn a group aware of itself into one effectively co-operating, if only on one, crucial and impressive occasion.

As regards the rites themselves, they are full of distortions and unorthodox innovations, due partly to the adaptation of the cult to the urban conditions and partly to genuine misunderstandings, linguistic and otherwise.[1] Yoruba influence, too, is visible, in certain anthropomorphisms which have crept into the interpretation of the *ndakó gboyá*. Altogether, the latter has come to overshadow completely the *gunnu* rites proper: the masks, of which there are seven, are now of two kinds, tall ones representing 'fathers', and smaller ones representing 'sons'; while the *ndakó gboyá* as such, far from being understood as an impersonal force, is positively stated to be a male spirit, and is even given a 'wife', symbolized by an upturned pot half-buried in the ground.

But not all the innovations represent merely errors or distortions of a fortuitous and unwitting kind. Three in particular express the new significance attaching to this ceremonial of a group in exile. First, the cult society of the *ndakó gboyá* has been remodelled into a secret society in the strict sense of the word, rigidly organized, and having its lodges in every Nupe village on the coast. Its head is the *Osode*; its members must be Nupe by paternal descent; and initiation is both difficult and expensive, though once it is achieved it remains hereditary. For the people, the *ndakó gboyá* society is unequivocally, and impressively, a piece of 'Nupedom'. If it is difficult to enter the society, this only means that it has come to represent something like an inner ring or élite among those who can call themselves Nupe; and if the *ndakó gboyá* society is now so planned that it includes every Nupe settlement and perpetuates itself by hereditary succession, this makes it another support of tribal identity.

[1] Thus the dance of the young men is called *gunnu ba*, which really means 'place of the *gunnu*', and the courtyard where the esoteric part of the rite takes place is called *kuso*, 'bush'.